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87. The apparatus of claims 72 or 73, wherein said nip is at least about 3150 kN/m².

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, and in light of the following comments, is respectfully requested.

In view of the Examiner's communication dated April 25, 2002, Applicants have amended the claims, assuming that the amendment filed on April 8, 2002 ~~was not~~ entered.

Contrary to the position taken by the Examiner, Applicants have not presented a different invention for examination, but have merely narrowed the invention as previously claimed. The Examiner will note that the claims are now directed to the void volume blanket as previously claimed, in combination with certain surrounding apparatus. The claims as amended are clearly patentable over the cited prior art.

DRAWING OBJECTION:

The Examiner has requested that Figures 1, 4, and 5 be designated as prior art. The applicants have submitted the drawing amendments for the Examiner's approval. The applicants will present formal drawings upon indication by the Examiner of his acceptance of the proposed changes.

FINNEGAN
HENDERSON
FARABOW
GARRETT &
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.408.4000
Fax 202.408.4400
www.finnegan.com

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112, 1ST PARAGRAPH

In the Office Action dated January 8, 2002, the Examiner rejected claims 38-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Specifically, the Examiner contends that the specification is not enabled for void volumes of less than 50 cm³/m². This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The specification, as well as original claim 38, described blankets with a void volume of less than 1500 cm³/m². One description of how to make the blankets, as pointed out by the Examiner, appears at page 42 of the specification. Further, the specification clearly describes how the void volume blankets are used, e.g., to produce a web. Contrary to the position taken by the Examiner, to make a void volume blanket having a void volume of less than 50 cm³/m², is described in the specification. It is made no differently than higher void volume blankets; however, it may be, for example, drilled less. The blankets having a void volume of less than 50 cm³/m² are used in the same manner as the higher void volume blankets. Since the present specification describes how to make and use the invention as presently claimed, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 38-42 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103, as unpatentable over *Kiuchi et al.*, *Hartigan Jr.*, *Stigberg*, *Cronin et al.*, *Salminen et al.* or *Dritt*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the cited references teach or suggest the claimed void volume press blanket in combination with a pressing unit to engage that blanket, where the press unit

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Washington, DC 20005
202.408.4000
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is configured to create a peak engagement pressure of at least about 2000 kN/m².
Since all of the references fail to teach or suggest the invention as claimed, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the timely allowance of claims 52-87 is respectfully requested.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this preliminary amendment, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: May 13, 2002

By: 

Lori-Ann Johnson
Reg. No. 34,498

FINNEGAN
HENDERSON
FARABOW
GARRETT &
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.408.4000
Fax 202.408.4400
www.finnegan.com

SIDE VIEW OF WIDE SHOE PRESS

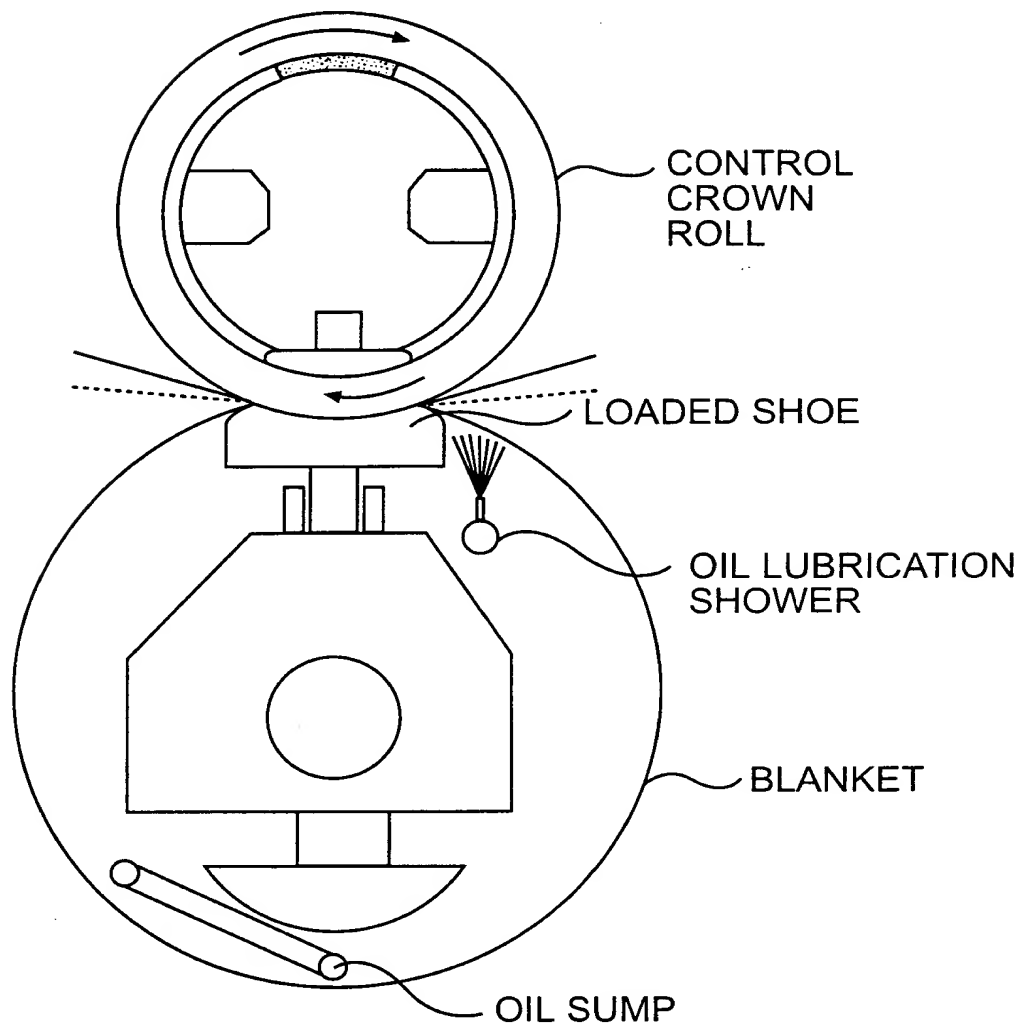


FIG. 1
PRIOR ART

CONVENTIONAL WET PRESS PROCESS LAYOUT

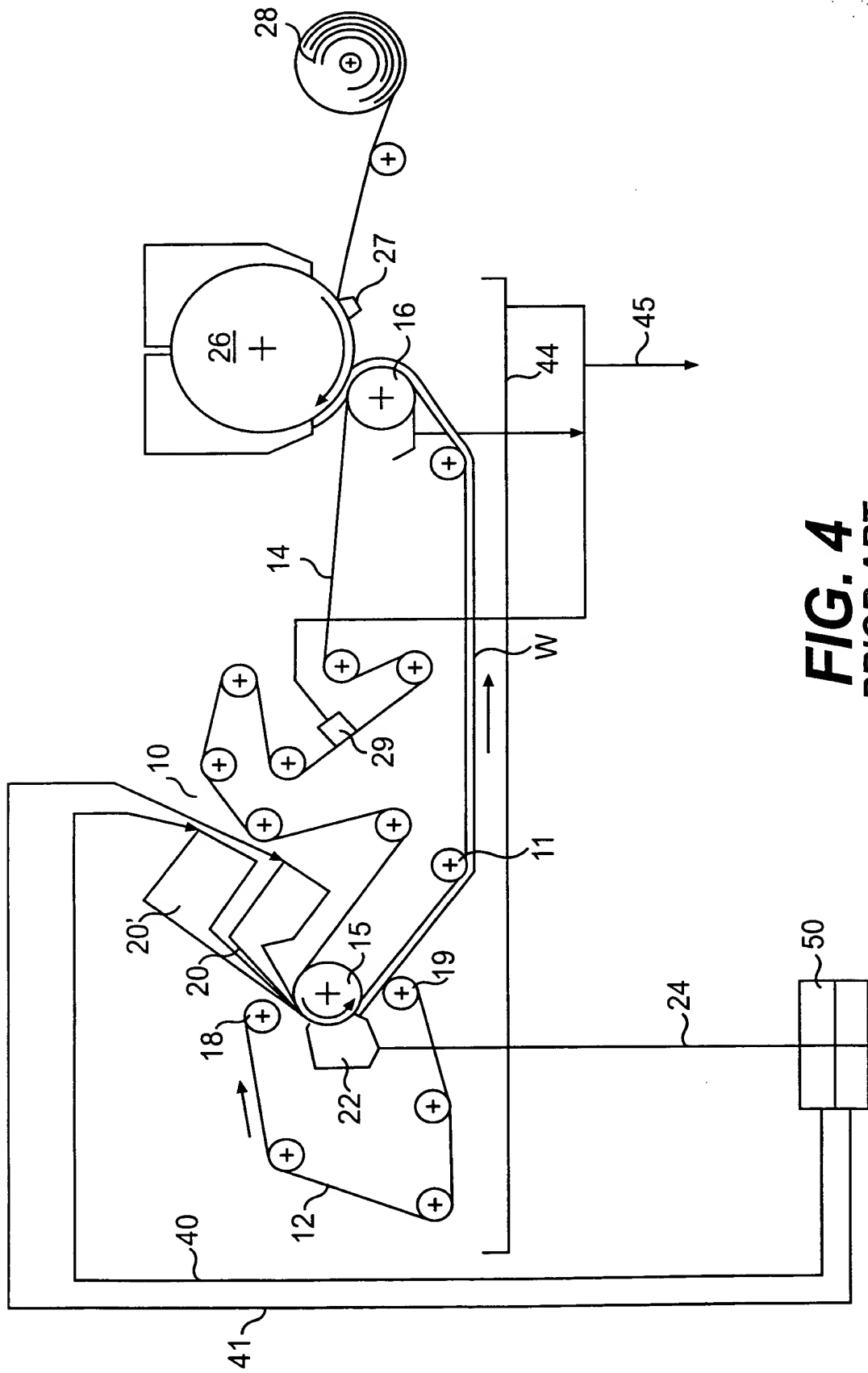


FIG. 4
PRIOR ART

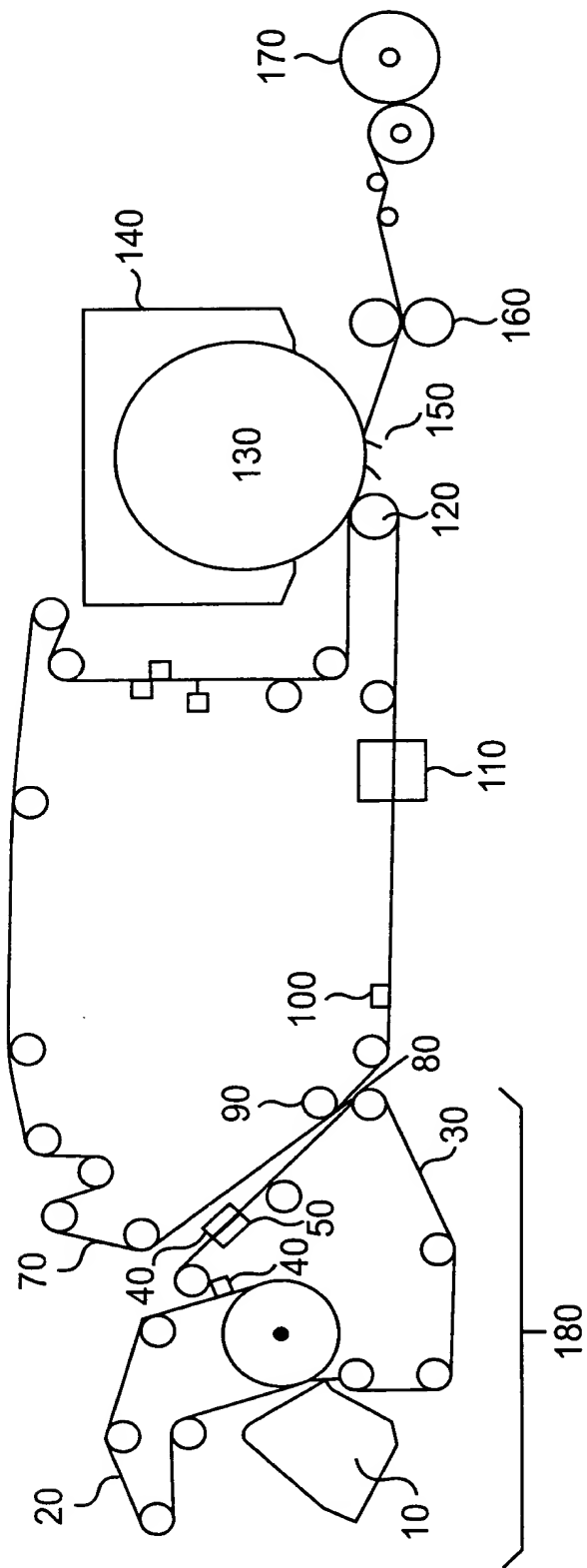


FIG. 5
PRIOR ART